

cooker to process vegetables and fruit. This, of course, was a rarity in that period. With this unique talent, the community could have food stored during the winter months. Annie became the expert who trained others in the community on the benefits of using the pressure cooker to preserve foods.

In 1942, many things changed in the lives of the Brown family, as it did for most families in the country. The three Brown brothers, Joseph, Clarence, and Cleant joined the Army to serve their country during World War II. Joe Brown, now had a challenge. He too desired to serve his country and left for California to work in the Navy Shipyard in northern California. Odessa and her sister left Lewisville for California. For a short time, Odessa worked at a Ford Plant in northern California. Frank, having finished his tour of duty in the U.S. Army, decided to settle in Los Angeles. Odessa and Frank married, and began building a family. They soon settled as one of the first African American families in Leimert Park.

Years later, after her eldest children left home for college, Odessa decided it was time to pursue her dream. She registered for college and earned her bachelors of arts degree from California State University at Dominguez Hills. Odessa then taught as a substitute teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School System.

Her quest to learn continues, as she has mastered the newest technologies. She now uses the computer and sends e-mail messages to her family. She continues to exercise her creative design skills by knitting and crocheting, and shares knitted scarves and crocheted blankets with family and friends.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing Odessa Juanita Brown as she celebrates her 85th birthday. She is truly an inspiration and a community treasure. I wish her many more years of health and prosperity.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 95TH BIRTHDAY OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA

##### HON. JASON ALTMIRE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 6, 2007*

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 95th birthday of the Girl Scouts of the USA. I wish to recognize the incredible contributions Girl Scouts have made to the United States over the past 95 years.

Since their inception in 1912, the Girl Scouts have used different skill-building exercises and instruction to inspire over 50 million young women of this country to reach their full potential as members of their communities and as citizens of the United States. With the acceptance of the Girl Scout Promise, young women around the world make a commitment to respect themselves and others, to help people at all times, and to be honest and caring in all that they do. Today, over 3.5 million Girl Scouts are working with each other and their communities to help build a brighter future for all of us.

This Saturday, young women from over 200 Girl Scout troops in my district will gather for a Girl Scouts of the USA birthday party. I am honored to have the privilege of joining them for this special celebration and I look forward to proudly thanking them for all of their hard work. These young women are truly an inspi-

ration to me, to the Fourth Congressional District of Pennsylvania, and to all American citizens.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN BOUTIN

##### HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 6, 2007*

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Kathleen Boutin for her leadership as director of Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth.

For the past 7 years, the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth has provided a safe and secure environment for abused and neglected children. At their facility, the Partnership provides a nurturing environment that teaches these children life skills and provides them with new opportunities for success.

Under Kathleen's leadership and direction, the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth operates two Safe Place programs, two drop-in centers and two additional centers are being constructed. In 2005, Nevada Partnership was responsible for Clark County's first count of homeless youth. This past year, they have assisted over 1,500 homeless youths. The Partnership also provides Nevada's homeless youth with medical care, emergency shelter services, long-term residential programs and the opportunity to transform their lives.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Kathleen Boutin for her leadership of the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth. The service that she and her organization provide for the area's homeless youth is laudable. I applaud Kathleen for her leadership and wish her continued success in their efforts to improve the lives of our cities' youth.

#### EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

SPEECH OF

##### HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 1, 2007*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 800) to amend the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to provide for mandatory injunctions for unfair labor practices during organizing efforts, and for other purposes:

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Chairman, I regret that I was unable to vote on H.R. 800, the Employee Free Choice Act, because of previously scheduled family matters. Had I been present, I would have enthusiastically cast my vote in support of this very important bill. In addition, I would have voted against each of the three anti-worker amendments and the Republican motion to recommit.

As a strong supporter of the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively, I have been an original cosponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act in each session of Congress that it has been introduced.

I believe it is critical that workers be able to make their own decision—freely and fairly—

about whether or not to form a union. Although we have had several years of economic growth and high corporate profits, middle-class families in America continue to feel the squeeze of stagnating incomes coupled with rising health care, education, and housing costs. By passing the H.R. 800 today, we can take an important step towards easing the middle class squeeze by giving workers a free choice to join together to bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

Some have said that this bill would abolish the secret ballot election. It would not. It simply gives employees a choice. Employees can still petition for an election, but if a majority of workers sign cards saying they want a union now, they get a union, and the employer must respect that choice.

This is about fixing the current system for forming unions and bargaining, which is badly broken. But above all, it is about respect and fairness for middle-class America, ensuring that workers have a choice—and a voice—at work.

#### EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

SPEECH OF

##### HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 1, 2007*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 800) to amend the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to provide for mandatory injunctions for unfair labor practices during organizing efforts, and for other purposes:

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 800, the Employee Free Choice Act, and I applaud Chairman MILLER and the Education and Labor Committee for making working families and the rights of organized labor a national priority.

Every employee's right to organize must be protected. Too often, this is not the case, and I saw it first hand when I worked in the retail industry. While many companies respect the rights of their employees, others put up hurdles and even break the law to keep workers from effectively coming together to fight for improved working conditions. This must be stopped.

H.R. 800 ensures that American workers have a voice in the workplace. It allows workers to decide whether they want to form a union if the majority of workers sign authorization cards in support of the union, and it strengthens penalties for employers that discriminate against union supporters.

This legislation is about strengthening America's working families. Union workers earn almost 30 percent more, on average, than non-union workers and approximately 44 percent more when you take into account wages and benefits.

In my home State of Minnesota and throughout the country, families struggle every day to make ends meet. The Employee Free Choice Act protects employees' right to organize, allowing workers to bargain for the higher wages and the better benefits that American families rely on and that they deserve.

On behalf of the working men and women of Minnesota, I am proud to support this legislation.

# BLUE DOG COALITION

## HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 6, 2007*

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, one of the benefits in being a Member of Congress is the privilege of working in our Nation's Capitol. The United States Capitol, in my mind, is among the greatest museums in the world—filled with fine art, intricate architecture, and amazing statues of our country's most important historical figures.

Obviously, the Capitol is a place of great historical significance. One of the most important votes ever taken in this House was the declaration of war against Japan on December 8, 1941. This was followed 3 days later with declarations against the Axis, Germany and Italy. This in turn was followed in 1942 by declarations against Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. My friends, this was the last time Congress formally declared war against any nation.

For me, and I know for many of my friends in the Blue Dog Coalition, the opportunity to serve in this body is an honor bestowed on us by our constituents. Quite frankly, a great responsibility comes with this honor—a responsibility to represent the views of all our constituents, rather than the views of partisans on the left and right. This is why the Blue Dog Coalition advocates for a middle-ground in our policies, and I think the American people agree, the middle is the best place to govern. Madam Speaker, we have to be bipartisan, we have to be sensible, and we have to try and work together in a harmonious way to find solutions to the difficulties facing our Nation.

When I first came to Congress a Member asked me what I wanted to change about America. I thought about this real hard, and I was surprised at how quickly I came to my answer. My answer was that I did not want to change America. No country in the world cares for its citizens and provides them with the amount of support as the government of these United States of America. While I do not want to change America, our country does have problems, and I think we can address these best by working together. So, I want to challenge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, let us start being a little more civil and little more cooperative with each other.

Two weeks ago the House debated a resolution honoring our soldiers and disagreeing with the President's proposal to send an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq. Sadly, many of my friends on the other side of the aisle allowed the debate to disintegrate into questions about the patriotism of Members of Congress, as though you are only patriotic if we blindly follow the President's every decision lock step. How shameful. I wonder what our Founding Fathers would think of the idea that the President's policies shouldn't be question or criticized. Seems to me if that was the Founder's goal they wouldn't have created the Congress, a bicameral co-equal branch of government. Instead they would have suggested we create a new kingdom out of America, or perhaps ad-

vocated for a government very similar to the one we overthrew in Iraq. Thankfully, in their infinite wisdom the Founders understood the necessity of debate, of questioning the administrations' policies, of a representative Republic. How ironic that members of the Republican Party came down to the floor and questioned the patriotism of Members of Congress for doing exactly what the Founders intended—debate policies so you can arrive at the best decision for the American people.

Now, one of the biggest challenges facing America, and something Congress debates every year around this time is our budget situation and our deficit. In 1980 I was elected to the State House in Tennessee. I remember one day traveling to Nashville from my home in Byrdstown when I heard on the radio that we had just increased our national debt to \$1 trillion. That frightened me. A trillion dollars is a lot of money, but it was a particularly high amount in the 1980s. Back then it was a struggle to raise our debt limit by \$15 to \$20 billion. Now we raise our debt ceiling every year by hundreds of billions of dollars without even batting an eye. Many times we do it without having an up-or-down vote on that particular debt increase.

After I heard that report on the radio back in 1981 I began to pay closer attention to our national debt. Over the next 12 years I watched as our debt by grew by almost \$3 trillion. I kept thinking to myself, how is this possible? It took almost 200 years for the debt to reach \$1 trillion, and yet, over a short period of time in the 80s and early 90s the debt tripled. Then in the 1990's we put in place pay-as-you-go budget rules that forced Congress and the administration to budget like every American family—meaning that the Federal Government could only spend what it took in. The result was a return to budget surpluses that helped us actually pay down a little bit of our national debt. Now, I know it was only a projection, but by the time President Clinton left office we were looking at having a 10-year surplus over \$5 trillion. Unfortunately, the next administration and Republican-led Congress allowed PAYGO to expire and the results were predictable, and \$8 trillion reverse of fortunes. So now we find ourselves in a situation where our annual deficits, excluding the Social Security surplus, exceed \$400 billion and our national debt is currently \$8.8 trillion, which amounts to \$29,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country. Where is the fiscal responsibility in that? What happened to the Republican Party? The so-called party of smaller government just couldn't resist dipping into the Treasury's cookie jar to feed their spending frizzy. Sadly, the big losers of this policy are my grandchildren and the soldiers returning home from war. They will be the ones taxed with paying down our debt. That, my friends, is immoral and shameful.

You know, my chief of staff recently had a baby they nicknamed Willis. The first thing Willis did when he came into this world was cry. Now I know why he was crying. He had just been born and he inherited his share of the national debt—\$29,000. By the time he is old enough to have a job his share of the debt limit will be more than five times the cost of the first house I bought for my family in the late 1960s. We have got to do better than this. We have a moral responsibility to do better than this. This Congress has taken the first steps by reinstating PAYGO rules in the

House. Now we must go one step further and make them part of the statute.

Now, I would like to go back and talk about Iraq a little more. Too often I hear folks in this Chamber saying the Democratic policy is "cut and run" and the White House policy is "stay the course." Both of these are wrong. We can't stay the course, and we can't cut and run.

Last week I saw that Vice President CHENEY was in Japan thanking our troops, and I remembered that we still have troops in Japan following World War II. We also have military bases still operating in Germany from that war. Additionally, we have thousands of troops in South Korea even though the Korean War ended long ago. We still have soldiers in Kosovo and Bosnia and Serbia and the Balkans from our involvement there in the 1990s. You know, it is worth noting that our friends on the other side of the aisle criticized President Clinton in the 1990s for our involvement in that conflict, saying it was not our duty to "Nation build," and they wanted to set up a timetable for withdrawal. I believe our current President even lobbied those criticisms when he was a candidate. Sometimes I feel like hypocrisy is the currency of Washington.

Continuing to look around the world you will notice we have a military presence in Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Of course some of them are there for our current war, but many were there beforehand as a result of the Persian Gulf war. The Persian Gulf war was U.N.-sanctioned, and it is my understanding that we overwhelmed Saddam Hussein with our troop numbers, and then we used no-fly-zone in the south and north to essentially block him in his own country. But we had to keep our military in the area to protect the vast oil reserves in the Middle East region of the world.

In my opinion, from looking at history, we will always have a military presence in the Middle East. The question is how will we stay in the Middle East?

Quite frankly, we must stay in the Middle East in a manner that will help ensure the security and peace of the area. Of course we want the Iraqis to win the peace and control their own country, so the key issue is how do we help them in this endeavor? Since we destroyed the Iraqi army, one that was able to resist a larger Iranian army for 10 years, we must act as their army until we have trained enough of their new army to the point where they can take over. In the meantime, I believe we need to pull our troops out of the kill zone in Baghdad and move them to the border with Syria and Iran to cut off any support for the insurgency that may be coming from those countries. At the same time the Iraqi police forces and new military must engage and control the fight within the country. It is their country; they have to win the peace. However, we can and should support them in eliminating any terrorist cells that pop up in Iraq. I believe we can do this with quick-strike forces and our advanced weaponry with minimal American casualties.

Twelve million Iraqis voted in December of 2005. This sent me the signal that they want their own country—not an American occupied country. They have established a constitution and set up their government with elected officials and various departments. Now they also have to fight those within their country who threaten their democracy. We can assist, but the will has to be theirs.